

Miller & Chevalier

Barry J. Pollack
Member
202-626-5830
bpollack@milchev.com

January 17, 2017

Magistrate Judge Theresa C. Buchanan
Albert V. Bryan U.S. Courthouse
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Judge Buchanan:

Enclosed please find five letters on behalf of Mr. Issac Lanier Avant, whose sentencing is scheduled for this morning at 10:00 a.m. A number of the enclosed letters are from elected officials. Mr. Avant does not expect you to give any more weight to a sentencing letter from an elected official than to any other sentencing letter. Conversely, he does not believe these letters should be discounted or given any less weight than any other sentencing letters.

The people who have written the Court have not written because of any office they hold. They have written because they are the people who know Mr. Avant best. Indeed, they have known him for decades, interact with him regularly, and have deep personal relationships with him. In sum, they are the people who are in the best position to give the Court insight into Mr. Avant's character, his career as a public servant, and his lifetime of admirably serving his community.

Comments in the attached letters include:

- In our opinion, you could not find a more thoughtful and caring person than Lanier. We are proud of him and his record of public service on behalf of our state and our country.
- He has always been driven by the opportunity to serve others. He has a unique ability to bring people together despite their differences. He is committed to using his extraordinary talents to make good things happen for other people.

Magistrate Judge Theresa C. Buchanan

January 17, 2017

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- His qualities as a good Christian man that shows love and support to those who have come in contact with him are impeccable.
- He is exceptionally benevolent and considerate.
- I can say without equivocation he is one who has added value to the lives that he has encountered and is a person not simply of standing in the community but also one of great substance.

Mr. Avant respectfully requests you to consider the willingness of these individuals to take the time to write to the Court and go on record providing their enthusiastic support for him. He hopes you will take into account the information they have to provide along with all of the other information that has been presented to the Court.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. J. Pollack", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Barry J. Pollack

Counsel for Issac Lanier Avant

W. Criss Lott, Ph.D.
Clinical and Forensic Psychologist
drwclott@gmail.com

665 Highway 51 North
Ridgeland MS 39157

Tel: 601-707-5023
Fax: 601-707-5068

January 10, 2017

Honorable Judge Theresa Carroll Buchanan
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 223214

RE: Issac Lanier Avant

Dear Judge Buchanan:

My wife and I are writing a letter of support for Lanier. My wife and I are 62 years old, and we are native Mississippians. I have been practicing psychology for the past 30 years and my wife has been an Administrative Law Judge with the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission for the past 32 years. We have two children, a daughter age 26 and a son age 23.

We met Lanier in the summer of 2007. He was friends with a young law student with the Southern Poverty Law Center whom we were hosting for the summer. Mississippi is, as you might imagine, a very small world and I learned that my brother and Lanier's father were friends and were both County Supervisors at the time we met.

Lanier very quickly became close friends with my family, as he began visiting us when he would fly in to Jackson on business for Congressman Thompson. He also spent the summer of 2008 with us as he was preparing for his bar exam. In the summer of 2009 my daughter spent the summer and fall interning with Lanier with the Homeland Security Department, and Lanier has been a friend and confidant of hers since then. She continues to describe her experience with Lanier as the most fascinating time in her life. Three years later my son was able to spend the summer with Lanier as an intern, an experience that left an indelible mark upon him as well.

In our opinion, you could not find a more thoughtful and caring person than Lanier. We are proud of him and of his record of public service on behalf of our state and our country. We hope you will see him in this manner as well.

Respectfully,
/s/Margaret Deneise Turner Lott
/s/William Criss Lott

Mississippi State Senate



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

Enrolled Bills - Chairman
Corrections
Finance
Insurance
Judiciary, Division A
Judiciary, Division B
Labor
Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks

Post Office Box 1854
Greenville, MS 38702
Office: 662-334-1666
Home: 662-378-8764
dsimmons@senate.ms.gov

SENATOR DERRICK T. SIMMONS

District 12

Bolivar • Coahoma • Washington Counties

January 11, 2017

The Honorable Theresa Carroll Buchanan
U.S. Magistrate Judge

Re: Letter of Support for I. Lanier Avant

Dear Judge Buchanan:

Writing this letter literally brings me to tears. Writing such a letter about someone you have grown to love is emotional. Even so, it is my pleasure to write this letter of unqualified support for Mr. I. Lanier Avant. I know you have received many letters of support for Lanier. I do not intend to be redundant nor cumulative but I would like to share with you what I know about Lanier.

Lanier and I met around 1996 at our undergraduate alma mater Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi. More than twenty (20) years later, we are the best of friends and some even call us brothers. After undergraduate studies in Mississippi, we continued our educational pursuits in graduate and professional school programs in the Washington D.C. metro area. There, we were roommates and we have maintained our friendship after my return to our home state in 2005.

I know Lanier is an extraordinary person. Lanier has always been a respectful gentleman. I account numerous times when Lanier demonstrated the utmost respect for women and the elderly. He is loving, kind, and very considerate of others. That consideration extended to almost every person that Lanier met. At Jackson State, Lanier immediately made an impact on me and the larger campus community. He was a leader in the classroom as well as in clubs and organizations. He was always driven by the opportunity to serve others. His commitment was that of a servant leader because he led through service. From the moment I met Lanier on campus, he impressed me as an intelligent and very capable peer. Although we were both students, he was my role model. Lanier made me a better person. I modeled myself after Lanier because it was very apparent that he had the favor of God and he was so unselfish in his pursuits. He has a unique ability to bring people together despite their differences. He is committed to using his extraordinary talents to make good things happen for other people. That landed him his current role as he works to serve others on a larger platform.

Lanier is deeply remorseful for what brings him before you. I respectfully request and sincerely pray for your compassion, mercy and leniency in this matter.

I would be pleased to provide additional information about Lanier if requested to do so.

Sincerely,


Derrick T. Simmons

City of Greenville, Mississippi

City Councilmembers

Errick D. Simmons
Mayor



Al Brock, Ward 1
Lois Hawkins, Ward 2
Carolyn Weathers, Ward 3
Betty J. Watkins, Ward 4
Ann Hollowell, Ward 5
James Wilson, Ward 6

Office of the Mayor

340 Main Street • P.O. Box 897 • Greenville, MS 38701 • Telephone: 662.378.1501 • Facsimile: 662.378.0276 • Email: edsimmons@greenvill.ms.gov

January 11, 2017

The Honorable Theresa Carroll Buchanan
U.S. Magistrate Judge

Re: Letter of Support for I. Lanier Avant

Dear Judge Buchanan:

I respectfully request leniency during the sentencing of Mr. Isaac Lanier Avant. I have known Mr. Lanier for more than twenty (20) years. His qualities as a good Christian man that shows love and support to those who have come in contact with him are impeccable.

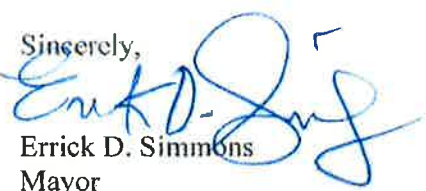
It was a pleasure to sit alongside Lanier during our matriculation through Jackson State University's (JSU) College of Business economics program. During our tenure at Jackson State University, Lanier made extraordinary efforts to assist the student body as he was the co-founder and editor of a new campus school newspaper. He was involved in extracurricular activities, including but not limited to, Economics Club and JSU's Sonic Boom Marching Band. After graduating from JSU, we journeyed to Washington D.C. together to enroll in Howard Graduate School of Arts and Science and Howard School of Law. We were roommates for five (5) years during that time. It was during these times Lanier transformed from being a roommate to a brother. Lanier loved to cook and invited all Mississippians who were in the D.C. area to our apartment. If I were in need of anything, he would find a way to provide. Lanier exhibited charity to not only me but also to those in need that came in contact with him.

After obtaining a professional degree, Lanier continued with an unselfish heart in his professional capacity. He would often call me to find a young high school and college student to come to D.C. to work and gain experience and exposure on Capitol Hill. He never looked down on anyone and he never judged people for their shortcomings. He always looked for the good in people. I just want to say, although Lanier find himself before this Honorable Court under the circumstances, I respectfully request that you look for the good in him.

Lanier is deeply remorseful for what brings him before you. I respectfully request and sincerely pray for your compassion, mercy, and leniency in this matter.

With best personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,


Errick D. Simmons
Mayor



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
SECOND DISTRICT
MISSISSIPPI

2466 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-2402
(202) 225-5876

January 9, 2017

The Honorable Judge Theresa Carroll Buchanan
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Judge Buchanan:

I have served the public as an elected official since 1968. The people of my hometown first elected me as their city councilman before electing me as their mayor. After 12 years in municipal government, I was elected county supervisor, a position I held until my election to Congress in 1993. For the past 24 years, I have served honorably in the House of Representatives where I now hold the position of Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security.

I met Issac Lanier Avant (Lanier) in 1987. His late father and I were great friends who bonded over our dedication to public service as county supervisors from two seemingly opposite regions of the State – his rural and mine a suburban/rural portion of the State's largest county and home to the state capital. As a young boy, Lanier was exposed to the good virtues of public service and expressed his own interest in making life better for those in his community. I know him to be a respectful, humble, honest and generous man.

After graduating salutatorian of his high school class, Lanier began an internship in my Washington, DC office. I spent much of that summer recruiting him to my undergraduate alma mater, Tougaloo College. He was eager, selfless, smart and hardworking. I was impressed by his writing ability. Pleased with his work, I took him under my wing and invited him back for another internship the following summer. I recall him assisting officials in small towns where many churches had been recently torched. He was also resourceful in identifying federal resources for poor, disadvantaged school districts. He understood my aims of seeking to create equal opportunity, being responsive to constituents' needs, and putting forth the best possible effort. Lanier's third internship with me was in 1999, again, in my Washington, DC office. He

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Judge Buchanan Re: Lanier

returned to school and graduated with honors from Jackson State University, my graduate school alma mater, the following year.

I frequently discuss the need for Mississippians to work on behalf of Mississippi. Lanier and I have had countless conversations on this subject for nearly three decades. For me, it was a no-brainer to hire Lanier to join my staff. As I recall, he graduated on a Saturday, drove to Washington on Sunday and reported to work on Monday. His enthusiasm and concern for his fellowman were undeniable. I knew he could make a valuable contribution to my staff and be a respected public servant, which he continues to do even today.

Following my re-election in 2002, I asked Lanier to serve as my Chief of Staff. In that role, he is my principal advisor. I not only trust him to manage my offices, but my political relationships, as well. Throughout his time and under his leadership at my direction, we have achieved goals with great benefit to the people of the Second District of Mississippi and beyond. When we learned of increased fatalities from unrestrained children in automobiles, Lanier originated the idea and led my effort to create a partnership to donate child safety seats to hundreds of needy families. When families died in their home fires because there were no smoke detectors, Lanier organized to secure and provide life-saving devices for many families in Holmes County.

Lanier has not forgotten the path that led him to his position of service. Each year, without provocation, he seeks college students to serve as interns in my offices. Many of these students would not otherwise be given the opportunity to work for their Member of Congress. Lanier understands the importance of this effort. In fact, nearly ten years ago, he brought that same perspective to a new assignment I entrusted to him – the role of Staff Director for the Committee on Homeland Security, where I served as Chairman.

For more than 20 years, I have enjoyed regular interactions with Lanier. The vast majority of that time - about 15 years - has included daily contact. I have come to rely on and trust Lanier as a staffer, understudy and friend. He is exceptionally benevolent and considerate. I know him to be man of faith who was raised by his loving parents to do right by others. He has accepted responsibility for the uncharacteristic lapse in judgment that has brought him to your court – failing to file timely tax returns – and I believe he is deeply regretful and highly unlikely to offend again.

Your Honor, as you consider the punishment for Lanier, I ask that my extensive experience with and trust of him be taken into consideration. If given the opportunity, I believe Lanier will comply with your instructions to account for his actions. Please contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Reid Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church, Inc.



ONE CHURCH-TWO LOCATIONS

Rev. Dr. Lee P. Washington
Senior Pastor

Rev. Matthew L. Watley
Executive Minister

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Judge Theresa Carroll Buchanan
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for
Eastern District of Virginia
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Honorable Judge Buchanan:

To employ the parlance of the south from which he hails, Lanier Avant is 'good people'. His quiet strength and self-effacing personality engender in others a sense of calm and confidence. I first came to know Bro. Lanier through his attendance at our church. His excitement about the ministry has not wavered nor has his penchant for encouraging his circle of friends to attend as well. He introduced me to the wonderful world of sporting clays and I have been blessed to serve as a witness to a number of triumphs and personal tragedies in his life. I can say without equivocation is that he is one who has added real value to the lives that he has encountered and is a person not simply of standing in the community but also one of great substance.

My prayer for his predicament is that he would be given every consideration of lenience and grace. I am not an attorney, but I would imagine that our system of justice allows for a wide margin of consideration in the treatment of individuals who fall under her purview in order to distinguish those who have exercised moments of poor judgement from those who are of a baser ~~motivation and disposition~~. Bro. Lanier is at the top of the spectrum of those of us who inexplicably err from time to time because by nature we are all imperfect. Therefore, I vouchsafe for this person that I have known well for many years that to return Bro. Lanier to his place in society without further sanction will be not only in his interest, but well accrete to the manifest benefit of our community as whole. In fact, to even remove this stain from

his otherwise stellar record would easily serve the greater good. I posit this missive humbly and without reservation, with clear conscience as a man and minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Godly Blessings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matthew L. Watley', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rev. Matthew L. Watley

Executive Minister

Reid Temple Temple AME Church- North Campus